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Letter dated 28 July 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the forty-sixth monthly report of the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 June to 22 July 2017.

The security situation had previously been cited as impeding efforts to destroy all of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. I am therefore encouraged that, in his note to the OPCW Executive Council, the Director General states that the security situation now allows the safe access of the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the last two stationary above-ground facilities. I note that planning is under way to verify the destruction of those two remaining facilities.

Regarding efforts to clarify all outstanding issues relating to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Director General reiterates that there are a number of issues still to be resolved. OPCW has asked the Syrian Arab Republic to provide documentation that will assist in this matter, and that will permit the resumption of consultations between OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic. I continue to encourage timely and good faith cooperation between OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic. It is imperative that these outstanding issues be resolved.

On 30 June 2017, I transmitted to the Security Council the report of the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic regarding an alleged incident in Khan Shaykhun in April 2017 (S/2017/567). In the report, it was concluded that a large number of people, some of whom died, had been exposed to sarin gas, and the number of fatalities was estimated at approximately 100 people.

The confirmation in the report of the use of Schedule 1 chemical weapons should leave everyone with the deepest concern. The continuing use of chemical weapons in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic is an affront to humanity, for which there can be no justification and for which there must be accountability.

I note that the fact-finding mission is focusing its work on credible allegations among more than 60 alleged incidents of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, reported from December 2015 until the end of March 2016. I also note that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism continues to investigate two incidents in which the OPCW fact-finding mission confirmed the use of chemical weapons — in Um-Housh, Aleppo, in September 2016, and in Khan Shaykhun. This work is of critical

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importance, and I reiterate my call upon all Member States to support the fact-finding mission and the Mechanism.

On 15 June and 5 July 2017, the Joint Investigative Mechanism requested information related to the two incidents under its investigation. The Mechanism needs complete support in accessing the quality information that is needed for the investigation of these incidents. I urge all Member States in a position to provide information to the Mechanism to do so in a timely manner.

I reiterate my utmost confidence in the ability of the Joint Investigative Mechanism to implement its mandate in an independent, impartial and objective manner. I stress the previous determination by the Security Council that the use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat to international peace and security and a serious violation of international law. I hope that the Security Council will demonstrate the unity necessary to ensure that those who have used chemical weapons are held accountable, in order to deter and put an end to those inhumane acts, for which there can be no impunity.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 June to 22 July 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the forty-sixth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 June 2017 to 22 July 2017.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As reported previously, the last remaining aircraft hangar in the Syrian Arab Republic was verified as destroyed on 6 June 2017. As stated by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Council at its Eighty-Fifth Session (EC-85/DG.28, dated 11 July 2017), the security situation now allows safe access for the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the last two stationary above-ground facilities. Consequently, plans are being made to carry out an inspection to verify the destruction of these two remaining sites of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

(b) On 18 July 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its forty-fourth monthly report (EC-86/P/NAT.1, dated 19 July 2017) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As reported previously, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. During the reporting period, the Secretariat has continued its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5. A Note entitled "Report of the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" was issued by the Director-General on 4 July 2017 (EC-85/DG.25). As stated by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Council at its Eighty-Fifth Session, there are still a number of issues to be resolved and the Secretariat has asked the Syrian Arab Republic to provide the necessary documents that may help to clarify them. The Director-General also reiterated his intention to invite H.E. Dr. Faisal Mekdad, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, for a new round of consultations, provided that assurance could be given that these consultations will produce tangible results.

9. As reported previously, in accordance with paragraph 11 of decision EC-83/DEC.5, a report on the first inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in the Syrian Arab Republic was issued on 2 June 2017 (EC-85/DG.16). As mentioned in this report and recalled by the Director-General in his opening statement to the Council at its Eighty-Fifth Session, the Secretariat has commenced planning for the second inspections of these facilities, to be conducted in the second half of 2017.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

10. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

11. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

12. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of

the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 9.8 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union, with further contributions currently under discussion.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

13. During the period under review, the FFM finalised its work regarding the allegations of use of chemical weapons on 4 April 2017 in the Khan Shaykhun area of southern Idlib in the Syrian Arab Republic, which reportedly resulted in the deaths of approximately 100 people, including children, and injuries to hundreds of others. A Note by the Secretariat entitled "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria regarding an Alleged Incident in Khan Shaykhun, Syrian Arab Republic, April 2017" (S/1510/2017, dated 29 June 2017) was submitted for the consideration of States Parties and forwarded to the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

14. The Secretariat briefed the Council at its Fifty-Fifth Meeting, which was convened on 5 July 2017, to discuss the aforementioned report, together with the report entitled "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria regarding the Incident of 16 September 2016 as Reported in the Note Verbale of the Syrian Arab Republic Number 113, dated 29 November 2016" (S/1491/2017, dated 1 May 2017). Members of the FFM explained how they came to the conclusion that two casualties reported to have been involved in the incident in Um-Housh, Aleppo, on 16 September 2016 were exposed to sulfur mustard and that sarin was used as a chemical weapon in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017. In his statement to the Council at this meeting, the Director-General highlighted that the same validated methodologies consistent with internationally recognised methods of fact-finding investigations were used for both incidents. In his closing remarks to the Council at its Fifty-Fifth Meeting, the Director-General indicated that the results of the analysis, by two OPCW designated laboratories, of the samples provided by the Syrian Arab Republic related to the incident in Khan Shaykhun will be issued as a supplement to the FFM report (S/1510/2017).

15. Delegations at the Fifty-Fifth Meeting of the Council expressed their positions on the FFM's work and its two reports. The Council heard expressions of support for the work done thus far by the FFM.

16. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM will continue to carry out its inquiries about other allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. As stated by the Director-General in his closing remarks to the Council at its Fifty-Fifth Meeting, the FFM is focusing its work on credible allegations among over 60 alleged incidents reported from December 2015 until the end of March 2017, on which information and materials are available.

Conclusion

17. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM and on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues, as well as on the confirmation of the status of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.